

Non-Intervention SPEECH OF MR. J. B. THOMPSON, OF KENTUCKY.

On the Affairs of the Nation, and in favor of General Taylor's election to the Chief Magistracy.

Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, June 30, 1848. *No 2*

MR. CHAIRMAN: ANXIOUS as I am to adjourn this session of Congress, and as speedily as is consistent with the public interest revisit my home, I cannot, with my views of duty to myself and those I here represent, refrain from some remarks of a general character at this the most opportune time perhaps to offer them.

Between this Government in the conduct of its affairs in connexion with the ministry that for the time being governs it, and other governments possessing or even approximating it in the possession of political privileges and liberty, there is a marked difference. In England, the ministry are the real rulers of the empire—the sovereign being a mere automaton, a constitutional fixture, locum tenens under the constitution, without responsibility, and often without the intelligence or agency that should imply a correspondent responsibility.

The same doctrine, I believe, whether Thiers or Guizot was at the head of the ministry, prevailed in the late reign of Louis Phillippe in France, as much as it does and did in England whether Palmerston, Peel, or Russell heads the government. If in those countries of less latitudinous liberty than ours, whenever mal-administration, or public dissatisfaction, throws into a minority in Parliament, or threw in the Chamber of Deputies against the rulers, for the time being, a majority—if they, at such a juncture, resign the seals of office that others may endeavor to administer the government more satisfactorily, why, I ask, sir, are the opposition to the ruling dynasty, and the perpetuation of its power in the person of a partisan identified with it, responsible for its acts, committed to its measures, why are they so often here taunted with the inquiry, where is your programme of principles? What is your platform? Whilst I admit the propriety generally that the line of policy to be pursued by an opposition coming into power ought to be so demarked that the people may be satisfied of the comparative merits of their probable measures, and of the comparative patriotism, *not partizanship*, of the different aspirants to their confidence, I think there are one or two preliminary considerations to be noted. How proper and competent is it for those who have lost popular confidence, as exhibited by the representation on this floor, to demand that others shall not be considered more competent than they? Condemned by the last adjudication of the people, as shown here on this floor, to be unworthy of administering the Government, have they in right reason a right to require a paper programme of the future action of their opponents?—A programme against which may be directed all the imaginary, all the fancied, all the hypothetical and fallacious presages of evil that birds of ill-omen can croak?—And that beforehand, and by prophecy, according to theory, and not by experience, that by objections morbidly or malignly conjured up, others, and the measures of others, uncondemned by popular disapprobation, shall, without trial, be condemned.

If, in a monarchical government, the ministry, that on its own merits and measures cannot command a majority of popular representatives, goes out of power, and the sovereign, Queen Victoria or Louis Phillippe, commits to another premier the formation of a cabinet and council to have the custody of public affairs, and by different men and other measures essays to command public confidence, may not the sovereign people try a President or his dynasty upon their merits, and the merits of their measures, and commit the guardianship of the affairs of State to others in whose patriotism and ability they confide? And in doing so, I say a just judgment comes after proof, hearing, and trial. That General Taylor himself as a patriot and man, or that his administration is to be prejudged and condemned by foregone conclusions, is scarcely prudently to be asserted by the most *pre-eminent* or conceited sagacity and foresight with which any predetermined opponent may conceive himself endowed. In this connexion I wish simply to say, that strong and formidable as we know the ministers of the crown to be—the force and moral impress that the sovereign imparts—and the still greater power that corruption, restricted suffrage, or the rotten-borough system gives, are more fearful odds against the people, fearful odds in favor of the incumbents of power. I wish in our system I did not perceive this

same formidable and fearful power and disposition of incumbents in their own persons, or that of their successors, to perpetuate their rule.

That I may not, Mr. Chairman, be too discursive in saying here in Committee of the Whole upon the state of the Union what—that is, a speech generally upon the affairs of the nation—is elsewhere commonly said upon voting the address to the crown at the opening of Parliament, I for myself declare I desire to disguise no opinion I entertain; and for the Whig party I must say I believe, not beyond propriety, but up to, and above, and beyond what should properly be required by strict party warfare, their banner, under which I muster, is flung to the breeze, and their men and their principles, in all reasonable detail, upon it in characters of living light.

Men in power become arrogant and aggressive; they forget in their aggrandisement the friends and principles by which they arose to office, its honors and emoluments; they seem to themselves to have proprietorship in their stations, and eventually affect to hold on in despite of popular feeling and popular interest. For this, change is salutary; matters may become so bad that, proverbially speaking, any change is for the better. It is often, politically considered, better for the people.

But, upon this subject of platform, however prudent or proper that General Cass in his very acceptance of the nomination of the Baltimore Convention should declare his profession of political faith closed with that very letter of acceptance; however prudent that he should be farther unquestioned, or if questioned, *dumb*, was matter of taste with him, and of its propriety I do not complain. But the Baltimore Convention, we may be told, laid down a programme of principles. They reasserted or reaffirmed the principles of the Convention of 1844, held by the same party at the same place, and in addition thereto *annexed* some trite truisms, some stale axioms, many fallacies, and *did not reannex* Yucatan or France to this country. This Convention, it is true, laid down a platform, and claim to call themselves a Democratic Convention. May I make a slight examination of the claim of this body to the appellation of Democracy. I understand, Mr. Chairman, from the best lexicographers, that this word Democracy—a word of magic import, and not now of *precise significance*, yet of *spell-like influence*; in its derivation, is from the two Greek words “Damos, the people,” and Archo, to govern; and in its pure and primitive sense, signified a government by the people themselves, collectively. Well, in this first and pristine sense of the term, so far modifying it as to allow the people to govern through their representatives, I am not opposed to Democracy. Confidence in the integrity, intelligence, and competency of the people to govern themselves as understood and practised in the days of Washington, not as modernized or *Anglo-Saxonized*, I should say is the basis and ground-work of my Whiggery, or Democracy, term it as you like. But equity and equality are of the very essence of republicanism or Democracy rightly resolved into action. Then, allow me to inquire, was it Democratic; was it equal and equitable, that General Commander, of South Carolina, representing a part, say the whole of one Congressional district, should cast the vote for all of South Carolina? Was it fair and equal that a Carolinian, who, with his five negroes in his vote in the Presidential election counts as much as four New Yorkers or Ohioans, should, in the Convention, cast nine votes, and New York, with seventy-two delegates, not vote at all in the settlement of the question who was to be the Presidential candidate for the Democracy? This question has been significantly asked by a greater man than his father, the son of the high priest of Democracy in the days of Jackson, and his adviser and successor. It seems those “fossil remains” of a by-gone President, now quietly inhumed at Lindenwald, in his palmy days rejected of us, and the accepted of all true Democrats, have been galvanized into ephemeral life by the grieved and perturbed spirit of Jackson Democracy inurned in his grave. The Democratic Baltimore Convention of May, 1844, and that of May, 1848, recently holden there, both fundamentally, and as the basis of their action and organization, repudiated the doctrine that a majority of the Democratic votes in the Union, as represented in the Convention, should select the candidate of the party. The requisition that two-thirds should concentrate on a man to make him the nominee of the party by its *Democratic* and *equal* action at the first Convention, prostrated Van Buren; prostrated the principle that a majority should govern; and prostrated the old Jackson party proper, who centered upon and adhered to Van Buren.

Here it may be well to remark that the 1844 resolutions, now constituting the Democratic creed—platform is the fashionable phrase—it appears had been draughted as far back as the year 1840. They were drawn by a Mr. Gillett, the present Attorney General of the United States, a friend of Mr. Van Buren's, and were brought forward in 1844 by Mr. B. F. Butler, with the additional resolution—*that, to this country disastrous resolution—in reference to Oregon and Texas.* That resolution is in these words:

“Resolved, *That our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable; that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power, and that the reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures, which this convention recommends to the cordial support of the Democracy of the Union.*”

Just preceding this time, it will be remembered, that Mr. Clay, evidently to be the Whig candidate for the Presidency, had come out upon the subject of annexation. His position admitted of annexation in time, if no considerable portion of the confederacy objected; annexation immediate, arbitrary, violent, and bellicose towards Mexico he repudiated. Mr. Van Buren, also, was for the same pacific, just, prudent counsels—his letter was not non-committal; it was like a statesman's—patriotic—(maliciously it has been said for this first perpetration of political honesty in his career he suffered political death.) But does any man now believe that had either of these individuals come to the Presidency, and acting under the policy to which they were pledged, that we should have had war with Mexico, or even annexation. The Whigs, for Clay and pacific policy, nominated him; the Democrats, also, as shown by their majority vote for Van Buren, were for the same policy; and neither was for immediate annexation. Annexation and the consequent war, with all its waste of blood and treasure, were forced upon the nation by less than one-fourth of it—the Whigs, constituting about half the nation, were for pacific policy—the old Jackson party proper, represented by Van Buren, Benton, Blair, Wright, and such men, had wrenched *from them*, being a *majority* in the convention, and representing more than half of the Democrats who composed the other moiety of the Republic—had wrenched from them, I repeat, the lineal succession, power, and control of the Jackson dynasty. The present Chief Magistrate, James K. Polk, a new man, of no historic name from any achievement he had performed, or career he had run—known only as a man of fair character in his social relations, and as a partisan politician of moderate ability and of respectable standing in his party, was set up for the Presidency.

Now, it is true that after Polk, unthought of before, by force of cabal, combination, and the undemocratic custom and usages of his, the Democratic party, was foisted upon the track, that the celebrated resolutions were passed and endorsed by the convention. It is evident now to every one that the resolution in relation to Oregon and Texas was fraught with deep, perhaps interminable evil to the country. Questions with foreign nations—issues involving peace and war—matters of vital moment, upon which the nation would have to act as a unit—matters of as deep concern to Whig as to Democrat, were seized upon and brought into the arena of political strife—the country presented to foreign nations as divided upon questions of foreign policy—the reoccupation of Oregon—the reannexation of Texas degraded from the position of great American questions, in which Whig and Democrat, as to their result, could feel but with one heart, and that an American heart; and, could, in their termination or prosecution, but expend common blood, common treasure, and at last, *for weal or for woe*, abide the fate of a common country—that country to which these questions, and not to a party, in all their seriousness and momentous import, belonged.

Mr. Polk, accidentally nominated by virtue of a Democratic usage which enabled a fragment, or rather a faction of his party to thwart the majority and defeat Van Buren, came into power without prestige, moral force, or gravity of character to lead a party. He had been nominated with “all of Oregon” on one side—a great territorial bait and temptation to the North and non-slaveholding States—Texas and immediate annexation—immense territorial aggrandizement for the South and slaveholding interest on the other side. By the force of party he was elected—resolutions to which the party had been committed, however imprudently or inconsiderately, it was now immaterial; how little considered, or canvassed, or even understood by the great Sanhedrim of the party, however ignorantly or irresponsibly they

were adopted, was immaterial, they were now fixed upon the party and upon the President elect.

He was worked into the Presidency with Oregon and Texas on either side as a horse is worked in blinds; when in he straightway announced, or rather reiterated, that our "title to the whole of Oregon is clear and unquestionable." This position, compared with what our Government and what profound statesmen before him had, in our diplomatic intercourse with England been willing to do—to stop at the 49th parallel of latitude north; this pretension of title to 54° 40' of latitude, was regarded by the English Government as rank aggression—a supercilious dictation of terms laid down in emphatic language "clear and unquestionable," and from which there was to be no receding. Without further allusion to the message, or the diplomatic correspondence, we all know the final denouement of this matter. Pressed to the verge of a war with the most formidable nation of the earth, with whom we have the largest commercial transactions—a nation of common blood, language, and religion, and between whom and us there should be a generous emulation to excel in the arts of peace, the advance of civilization, and all that ennobles and dignifies our nature. With this nation, towards whom it seems to be the constant aim and sedulous care of unprincipled demagogues ever to pander to and profit by the hate, or prejudice that former wars have left upon our people—that implacable hate of ancient enmity—"natural enemy" is the term—that unrelenting, unforgiving, blind, senseless, unchanging hate finds a proper abode in a grovelling mind and a malicious heart, and is fed with delicious aliment, and fitly fed by a demagogue. This feeling played upon in a Presidential canvass to the tune of five degrees 40 minutes of land, running in a belt from the Pacific to the Lakes, to a land-loving people, allured many from the proper consideration of the real merits of the question in issue between the parties.

The President, however, in his messages to Congress, and through Mr. Buchanan, his Secretary of State, seemed for a time in good faith, with apparent decision, determined to hazard war with England—risk his fame, risk the ascendancy and popularity of his party, to venture all and every thing upon fixing our boundary at 54° 40'. But when in the progress of negotiations the "ultima ratio regum"—the inevitable resort to the arbitrament of the sword, or downright retreat from his and his convention's position became inevitable, he shirked responsibility by coming to the Senate with a treaty at the 49th degree parallel of north latitude. I wish not to revamp an old speech, or rehash for a repast here what we have heard or said so often. I must say I am satisfied with the line for two reasons, the less we have of it the better, and because profound statesmen before had been willing; if they had not not in fact committed our Government to that line. Appreciating as I do the mortification, the profound chagrin and sense of the perfidious loss to them of all the fruits and benefits of free territory held out to the northern men by the "all of Oregon" and Texas resolution, yet I know not whether I more despise the inflated vaunting—the hollow high-pressure for war with England, (and no one was more urgent for "all of Oregon," regardless of consequences, than Gen. Cass.) I repeat, Mr. Chairman, I know not whether I more despise that, or the tame acquiescence and supple support of the President by those who, in their first resentment, may have thought that *an infamy so profound the hand of resurrection could not reach him*, awaited any equivocal or receding conduct on the part of the President: or, whether I am more humiliated to have seen the Chief Magistrate of this proud Confederacy assume untenable position—vainly vaunt the impregnability of that position—manifest an apparently unconquerable determination to stand by it; and then, as he pressed up and pressed on, and saw that menace, irritation, and threatened aggression had waked up the old lion of England, who began to roar and lash his sides in rage, and come to the combat gnashing his serried fangs, long and often dabbled in the blood of the nations of the earth; and *our* President just then, like a doe over the mountains, scud away to the Senate with treaty in trembling hand, and to that Congress, unconsulted about Mexico, crying out, "men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved!"

The Senate advised the treaty. The boundary is established; may it remain inviolate forever. Between us and Mexico, too, there is now a limit, may it be perpetual; these things I only hope for in the ascendancy of Whig conservative measures, and the elevation to places of eminent trust of men not swift to anger and greedy for war. Remembering that "righteousness exalteth a nation," may even

our children's children not forget—"thou shalt not take nor remove thy neighbor's landmark, which *thy* predecessors have set in thy possession, which the Lord thy God will give thee in the land that thou shalt receive to possess."

The Chief Magistrate, still true to the behests of party, chafed, doubtless, by the loss of the confidence of his Oregon friends, having given up and surrendered what he and his party had over and again affirmed was "clearly and unquestionably ours," Oregon and Texas had stood before him worse than the horns of a dilemma—the Scylla and Charybdis had been before him. Shearing off from the northern free territory men, bearing away from "all of Oregon," and war with England, as he approached the awful granite front of the stubborn stone, around whose base lashed fearful waves, and the dismantled wrecks of many a gallant vessel dashed against its rugged front; our vessel of State, under the guidance of this modern Pylæus was run into the whirlpool of the Mexican war.

That the President, however convinced in his conscience, the treaty was wise and prudent, should have felt chagrined at his own manifest dereliction of position, and been stung by the averted confidence of his Oregon friends, is natural; yet, not more natural than he should attempt to throw himself for the support of his administration upon a division of his party—the southern division of his party—who desired annexation of southern territory.

These men for annexation of territory on our southern border could sustain his administration, and soothe wounded pride by the chance to re-establish character for "nerve," and to become signalized by a war with Mexico.

There is nothing, Mr. Chairman, so clearly elucidates the events of history as right chronological consecutiveness in their narration. The treaty abandoning our claim down to the 49th degree parallel of north latitude, was ratified before the commencement of the Mexican war. The orders of the President, through his Secretary of War to the officers of our army, and through his Secretary of State to our diplomatic agents abroad, have so often been discussed, I desire not to reiterate what has often been better said, perhaps, but only to give my version or understanding of some prominent facts. On the 3d day of March, 1845, just as the Tyler administration was expiring, the joint resolutions for the annexation of Texas were passed. The 8th May, 1846, the battle of Palo Alto was fought, and may be regarded as the commencement of hostilities.

The resolutions of annexation, as they passed the House, were so amended in Senate, and finally passed as by an alternate mode or resolution to admit of annexation through negotiation.

The first method, direct, abrupt, without consulting Mexico and grating to her pride; the other and alternate method was through negotiation, pacifically and soothingly to consummate annexation. The expiring administration of Tyler, ambitious of the glory of annexation, did not adopt the alternate method suggested and advocated by the Missouri statesman, but in its last hour despatched a messenger to Texas in hot haste with the resolution of annexation. That these resolutions could not have been passed, without the alternate attached, seems now to admit of no doubt. That with the alternate resolution attached they did pass, is to me conclusive evidence, that such men as Colonel Benton must have had some reliable certain assurance, that the incoming administration would adopt that alternate as it was virtually the condition upon which their votes were given for the resolutions. If the alternate was not to be acted upon, it was a futile and foolish thing. The messenger of Mr. Tyler, however, was not overtaken nor recalled. On the 4th July, 1845, by the acceptance of Texas of the terms of the joint resolutions, annexation was consummated. Every one admits, had there been no annexation there would have been no war. That annexation would result in war had always been predicted by the Whigs—if we took Texas, we took her with her quarrels, her difficulties, her wars. A treaty offensive and defensive, without limit or restriction, could not more fully have made us parties to the war, or rather quasi war, then suspended, than the incorporation of Texas entire into our Confederacy. The Mexican minister, General Almonte, had demanded his passports, and left here because he regarded annexation as equivalent to a declaration of war.

Notwithstanding this, however, Mexico, weak, vacillating, indecisive, torn by internal factions, was averse to war with us. It is true, demagogues in Mexico to aid

military usurpation, or gain place advocated war; *the same thing may happen in the U. States*. The question of boundary was by the terms of annexation reserved to the U. States—the sovereignty of Texas was merged—her rights and attributes as a nation, as to external and foreign matters, were now upon the footing of one of the States. What, then, was the proper boundary of Texas? Its extent was so far as she had by the sword made good her secession, her conquest, her jurisdiction, her *actual* sovereign power. To settle this was the business of our Government; it was not to annex, by conquest or purchase, New Mexico, Tamaulipas, or California, or other provinces of Mexico; that this business should have been done by negotiation, if possible, is admitted by all.

It is said, however, that negotiation failed.

It is to be remembered, that the order of the Government of the 13th January, 1846, in which General Taylor was peremptorily ordered to advance his position, was given, while Mr. Slidell, our minister, still remained in Mexico, and two months before he was finally rejected. That point of etiquette and diplomatic propriety, as to whether we should have sent a minister plenipotentiary or a mere commissioner, charged with the conduct and settlement of affairs arising out of the annexation of Texas, or whether Mexico agreed to receive the one or the other grade of officer, it is now idle to discuss. The feeble Mexican Government desired time, lacked strength to come up to the negotiations it desired, and eventually Herrera went down, and Parcdes came into power, because of the pacific purposes of the former, and the desire of the other for war. This order of the 13th January was given whilst Congress was in session; they were unconsulted. Our minister was still in Mexico, not rejected, his reception in the character he was commissioned being under advisement and discussion. Mexico did not decide she would not treat with a commissioner if sent upon Texas affairs only—she objected to the character in which he came. This advance movement of General Taylor from Corpus Christi, it appears now to be conceded by all impartial persons, I believe, was the immediate cause of hostilities. It is sometimes said that General Taylor advised this movement. As early as June 15th, 1845, Mr. Bancroft, the then Secretary of War, had written to General Taylor, “the ultimate point of your destination is the western frontier of Texas, where you will select and occupy, on or near the Rio Grande del Norte, such a site as will consist with the health of the troops, and will be best adapted to repel invasion, and to protect what in the event of annexation will be our western border. You will limit yourself to the defence of the territory of Texas, unless Mexico should declare war against the United States.” “Our western border,” “the territory of Texas,” “the western portion of Texas,” are the terms used. But what was the territory of Texas, what her limits, were the very questions undecided and open. That taking this order and the subsequent despatches to him, General Taylor should, on the 4th October, 1846, from Corpus Christi, have addressed the Department thus, is not surprising. “It is with great deference that I make any suggestion on topics which may become matter of delicate negotiation; but if our Government in settling the boundary question makes the line of the Rio Grande an *ultimatum*, I cannot doubt that the settlement of the question will be greatly facilitated and hastened by our taking possession at once of one or two points on or near the river. Our strength and state of preparation will be displayed in a manner not to be mistaken.”

This hypothetical recommendation is replete with good sense, as in fact is the entire letter. General Taylor did not know what our Government intended to claim as *our western border*. What was its ultimatum was unknown to him. As a good soldier, he may have thought in the event of war such positions very advantageous, and as a faithful officer deemed it his duty to communicate it. Show of front and intimidation might facilitate negotiation. Many sensible reflections are in the letter, and there is not in it any recommendation, except hypothetically, for an advance movement; the *contingency*, the *propriety*, the *order* for such movement, were all referred to the supreme authority at Washington.

But before the order of the 13th January, it seemed General Taylor modified his opinion even as to the advance at all. He never recommended an advance but upon supposition; not a hostile advance, but to aid negotiation.

On the 7th November, 1846, from Corpus Christi he wrote to the Department of War at Washington, among other things :

"The intelligence from Mexico, however, tends to modify in some degree the views expressed in that communication, (4th October letter.) The position (Corpus Christi) now occupied by the troops may perhaps be the best while negotiations are pending, or at any rate until a disposition shall be manifested by Mexico to protract them unreasonably. Under the supposition that such may be the view of the Department, I shall *make no movement* from this point, except for the purpose of examining the country until *further instructions are received*."

Those further instructions were the order of 13th January, 1846. From the Headquarters of the Army of Occupation, at Corpus Christi, General Taylor acknowledged "the communication of the Secretary of War, dated January 13, and containing the instructions of the President to move forward with (my) his force to the Rio Grande. It is thus perfectly manifest that in point of fact such recommendation of General Taylor to seize or occupy the disputed territory as is contended for never was given. They who regard the inception of the war as unpardonable can readily see that he is as to that blameless, and is free from this stain or calumny, if they so esteem it; and they who glory in the inception of the war, and still more in its progress, owe more to him for its prosecution than any other.

The President in his annual message, 1845, to Congress, at their meeting in December, had not acted upon the suggestions of General Taylor, never made but conditionally, and before that withdrawn; he then congratulated the country upon the "bloodless achievement" of the annexation of Texas; that "we *had* not sought to extend our territorial possessions by conquest, or our republican institutions over a reluctant people." This quieted the country; war was not thought of. The conquest of New Mexico and California, or their annexation, *reluctantly* or otherwise, had not been canvassed before the people, had never been passed upon by them. To many persons the war with Mexico came after these assurances as astoundingly as a clap of thunder in a clear sunny day.

But, Mr. Chairman, Commodore Connor with the home squadron was ordered down to Vera Cruz; our fleet in the Pacific, under Commodore Sloat, was hovering about the coast of California; in fact, from both oceans Mexico was blockaded and hemmed in, and our army ordered to advance to the Rio Grande. Can any man doubt that war, concerted, deliberate, premeditated war, had been resolved upon?

The space of time allowed for discussion here forbids such allusion to the correspondence and orders preceding the march upon the Rio Grande, the establishment of civil governments in New Mexico, and the various acts of the Government to compass not only annexation but these conquests, as I could desire.

By the Constitution, "*the Congress shall have power to declare war.*" That high trust was confided to the Representatives of the people, not the President. Our wise and venerated forefathers foresaw the President might be weak, might be wicked, might be both, and ruled by evil counsels. And yet this war was commenced and precipitated upon the country not by advice, consent, or even with the previous knowledge on the part of Congress, or the people, what the Executive was doing.

Without, I hope, incurring the hazard of proving tedious upon this question of boundary, which General Taylor was ordered to pass, not stopping to rely on the historical facts that east of the del Norte, when the order of the 13th January was given, there were Mexican custom-houses and Mexican people living unmolested under Mexican jurisdiction, I wish to array some proof from Democrats themselves. Mr. Donelson, a man of intelligence, a favorite of Jackson, whose name he bears, the charge des affaires of the United States to Texas, on 28th June, 1845, wrote to General Taylor, "that Corpus Christi is the most westerly point now occupied by Texas." Mr. Charles J. Ingersoll, as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, spoke of the country beyond the Nueces as "the natural boundary across which was marked, in the configuration of this continent by an Almighty hand, the stupendous deserts between the rivers Nueces and the Rio Grande, that boundary which, while peace is cherished, will be sacred. Not till the spirit of conquest rages will the people molest or mix with each other." Peace was not cherished, and that boundary has been transgressed.

When the Tyler treaty was under discussion in the Senate, a learned man, con-

versant for years with our southwestern people, their geography, their history, the oldest Senator in the Senate of the U. S., representing the State nearest the Mexican provinces; the father-in-law of Charles John Freemont, who explored so creditably to himself and to the country much of the Mexican country; a man, years ago conversant with the subject; a friend of Jackson and Jackson's administration; who bore upon his shoulders the feeble administration of Van Buren, with all its corruptions as Atlas is fabled to have upheld the Heavens; this man from his youth the admirer and friend of Jefferson, who may be said to be a Hebrew of the Hebrews, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, I mean Col. Benton, in that discussion, speaking from his vast erudition and extensive acquaintance with the subject, said:

"These former provinces of the Mexican Viceroyalty, *now departments of the Mexican Republic, lying on both sides of the Rio Grande, from its head to its mouth*, we now propose to incorporate, so far as they lie on the left bank of the river, into our Union, by virtue of a treaty of re-annexation with Texas. Let us pause and look at our new and important proposed acquisitions in this quarter. First, there is the department, formerly the province of *New Mexico*, lying on both sides of the river, from its head-spring to near the Paso del Norte—that is to say, half way down the river. This department is studded with towns and villages, is populated, well cultivated, and covered with flocks and herds. On its left bank (for I only speak of the part which we propose to re-annex) is, first, the frontier village Taos, 3,000 souls, and where the custom-house is kept, at which the Missouri caravans enter their goods. Then comes Santa Fe, the capital, 4,000 souls; then Albuquerque, 6,000 souls; then some scores of other towns and villages, all more or less populated and surrounded by flocks and fields. Then come the departments of *Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas*, without settlements, on the left bank of the river, but occupying the right bank, and commanding the left. All this—*being parts of four Mexican departments, now under Mexican Governors and Governments*—is permanently re-annexed to this Union, if this treaty is ratified, and is actually re-annexed from the moment of the signature of the treaty, according to the President's last message, to remain so until the acquisition is rejected by rejecting the treaty! The one half of the department of New Mexico, with its capital, becomes a territory of the United States; an angle of Chihuahua, at the Paso del Norte, famous for its wine, also becomes ours; a part of the Department of Coahuila, not populated on the left bank, which we take, but commanded from the right bank by Mexican authorities. The same of Tamaulipas, the ancient Nuevo Santander, (New St. Andrew,) and which covers both sides of the river from its mouth for some hundred miles up, and all the left bank of which is in the power and possession of Mexico. These, *in addition to the old Texas; these parts of four States; these towns and villages; these people and territory; these flocks and herds; THIS SLICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF MEXICO, TWO THOUSAND MILES LONG AND SOME HUNDRED BROAD*; all this our President has cut off from its mother empire, and presents to us, and declares it is ours till the Senate rejects it! He calls it TEXAS! And the cutting off he calls re-annexation! Humboldt calls it New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Nuevo Santander, (now Tamaulipas;) and the civilized world may qualify this re-annexation by the application of some odious and terrible epithet. Demosthenes advised the people of Athens not to take, but to re-take a certain city; and in that re-laid the virtue which saved the act from the character of spoliation and robbery. Will it be equally potent with us? And will the *re*, prefixed to the annexation, legitimate THE SEIZURE OF TWO THOUSAND MILES OF A NEIGHBOR'S DOMINION, WITH WHOM WE HAVE TREATIES OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP AND COMMERCE? Will it legitimate this seizure, made by virtue of a treaty with Texas, when no Texan force—witness the disastrous expeditions to Mier and to Santa Fe—has been seen near it without being killed or taken to the last man."

"I wash my hands of all attempts to dismember the Mexican Republic, by seizing her dominions in New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas. The treaty, IN ALL THAT RELATES TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE RIO GRANDE, IS AN ACT OF UNPARALLELED OUTRAGE ON MEXICO. It is the SEIZURE OF TWO THOUSAND MILES OF HER TERRITORY without a word of explanation with her, and by virtue of a treaty with Texas to which she is no party. Our Secretary of State, in his letter to the United States chargé in Mexico, and seven days after the treaty was signed, and after the Mexican Minister had withdrawn from our seat of Government, shows full well that he was conscious of THE ENORMITY OF THIS OUTRAGE; knew it was war; and proffered volunteer apologies to avert the consequences which he knew he had provoked."

"I therefore propose, as an additional resolution, applicable to the Rio del Norte boundary only—the one which I will read and send to the Secretary's table—and on which, at the proper time, I shall ask the vote of the Senate. This is the resolution:

"Resolved, That the incorporation of the left bank of the Rio del Norte into the American Union, by virtue of a treaty with Texas, comprehending, as the said incorporation would do, a part of the Mexican departments of New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Tamaulipas, would be an act of direct aggression on Mexico, for all the consequences of which the United States would stand responsible."

It may be that Benton and Humboldt knew nothing of geography, but the former ought to be good authority, and no body doubts but a Democrat in these matters. Let me remark, further, that in his celebrated speech of 13th May, 1847, at the St. Louis Exchange, in speaking of the war with Mexico, he said:

"The treaty of annexation, [meaning the Tyler treaty 1842,] was rejected, but annexation was still prosecuted. A resolution for the admission of Texas, as a State, passed the House of Representatives. An additional and alternate resolution was added in the Senate, to appoint Commissioners to negotiate for admission and conciliate Mexico, and thereby prevent annexation from bringing on war. The expiring administration of Mr. Tyler snatched the alternative from the hands of the President; hurried

off the House resolution by a midnight messenger; slammed the door of conciliation in the face of Mexico; and inflamed her pride and resentment to the highest degree. From that forth, every thing threatened war between the two countries, which broke out the ensuing year."

I will just here remark, that, although the midnight transmission of the resolutions of annexation may in manner have been wrong, and however much Col. Benton felt "he had endeavored to get back Texas without a war with Mexico, and was certain it might have been done with all ease by the simple process of leaving Texas and Mexico to make peace, and treating Mexico with the respect and deference due to a sister Republic, the more proud and sensitive because weak and unable to contend with us;" yet the country would always remember, Tyler's policy was adopted and followed up by Mr. Polk, and that annexation, and all its consequences, were the policy of the Democratic party and its President.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to bring to the stand another Democratic witness. On the 12th February, 1847, Mr. Calhoun, in the Senate, in speaking of the Mexican war—

"Entered into a vindication of his course in regard to the war. They were told that there would have been no war if the annexation of Texas had not taken place; and he was charged with inconsistency because he had favored the annexation and was opposed to the war. He was of opinion himself that, if the annexation of Texas had not taken place, there would have been no war with Mexico, but that annexation was not the cause of the war. The immediate cause of the war was the marching of our troops from Corpus Christi to the Rio del Norte. If Gen. Taylor had remained with his forces where he was, there would have been no invasion—there would have been no conflict.

"The President, it appeared, considered the Rio del Norte as the boundary of Texas, and was governed by that consideration in directing the movement of the army; but the question then arose—Did it belong to the President to determine what our boundaries were? There were but two ways of determining a question of boundary: one was by negotiation and treaty, and the other was, if the party contesting the boundary would not come to terms, for Congress to declare what our boundaries should be, and to maintain it at the hazard of war. The Constitution never placed it in the hands of the President to determine such a question. If any body was to be held responsible for the war, it was not the Senator from South Carolina. He deplored the war, for the manner in which it has been brought on. And here he might be asked why he had not taken some step to arrest the march of General Taylor? He answered, in the first place, that he did not hear of the marching order until a long time after it had been given. He got the first information of it from the Senator from Delaware. And that Senator would remember that he had said, when so informed, that he did not think such a thing could be possible. It turned out, however, to be true.

"After it had been officially announced, he had stated to his friends that the march of General Taylor ought to be arrested, otherwise it would bring on a war; and he would have moved a resolution to arrest the march of the troops had he not occupied the peculiar relation that he did at that time with the Executive in regard to the Oregon question. By moving such a resolution he would appear to stand opposed to the Executive, though not so in reality, and would have been prevented from carrying out his views in relation to the settlement of the Oregon question by which a war with England was averted."

Now, sir, it will be remembered Mr. Calhoun, during the time the Texas affair was transpiring, was, awhile, Secretary of State himself. Of the negotiations, and all connected with the history of the matter, he could say, "*quæque vidi et magna par quorum fui.*" This man, a Democrat, a disciple of the Jeffersonian school, Jackson's Vice President, Madison's War Minister, of large experience and great ability, expressed his surprise that the order of 13th January was given. He was astonished; the whole country was shocked. He declares, "the immediate cause of the war was the marching of our troops from Corpus Christi to the Rio del Norte," and, but for peculiar circumstances, "he would have moved a resolution to arrest the march of the troops." May I here ask my colleague (Mr. CLARKE,) who, a day or two since, when I was out, put to his Whig colleagues questions that my friend from another Kentucky district will, in due time, answer; does he not think it unkind, if not heathenish and unchristian, that Donaldson, Ingersoll, Benton, Calhoun, shall I add, Van Buren, the high priests in the party, and heretofore the keepers of the Democratic faith, shall be unchurched and unfrocked by men of but yesterday? Are these old and faithful Democrats to be whistled down the wind, a prey to fortune? Are they to be discredited and displaced? If they are false, there is still another.

I observe, from the Senate discussions upon the treaty, and newspaper publications, which are, I doubt not, correct, that in the instructions to Mr. Slidell of November 10, 1845, long previous to the war, in speaking of New Mexico, it is said it was settled two centuries ago, and has ever since been in the possession of Mexico, and not of Texas; and the despatch proceeds to say:

"The President desires to deal liberally with Mexico, and the Minister is authorized to offer, for a boundary, the Del Norte, from the sea up to the line of New Mexico; thence westerly and northerly, by the line of that province, till it comes to the river again; thence up the principal branch to the source; and thence due north to the boundary of the United States; and therefor he proposes to assume and pay all the just claims of our citizens against Mexico, and five millions of dollars besides."

Now, if Texas, which we annexed, and which the President and his party say was rightly annexed, and which they say run to the Rio Grande, included the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, why propose from *the sea to buy*? Did he mean to buy what belonged to us? Did he wish to pay Mexico for what we already owned? Or did he mean to admit, and did he not admit, that "our title was not clear and unquestionable?" Did he not mean to pay for the country on the sea-shore between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, and on the east of the Rio Grande up to the line of New Mexico? The law as to proof by confession, I know, extends to the gentleman's district, (Mr. CLARKE,) and to him I will only say, if he discards history, geography, admissions and confessions, and does not believe "Moses and the prophets," he would not believe one though "he rose from the dead." The treaty is ratified. Texas is annexed. It stands "a fixed fact;" and part of New Mexico, parts of Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, and California, are annexed. I fear it is but "the beginning of the end" of a policy, and a series of conquests or acquisitions, of portentous import and direful calamity to this country. I will now look to the result of these acts.

The treaty of Washington, concluded in 1842, fixed our northeastern boundary; the treaty or convention of Oregon in relation thereto has settled our northwestern boundary. The Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic ocean on the one side, and the Pacific ocean on the other side of the continent, limit our possessions. Now, instead of the ancient boundary of Louisiana, by this recent treaty of peace and limits, by the fifth and sixth sections, we are bounded as follows:

"ARTICLE V.—The boundary line between the two Republics shall commence in the Gulf of Mexico, three leagues from land, opposite the mouth of the Rio Grande, otherwise called Rio Bravo del Norte, or opposite the mouth of its deepest branch, if it should have more than one branch emptying directly into the sea; from thence up the middle of that river, following the deepest channel, where it has more than one, to the point where it strikes the southern boundary of New Mexico; thence westwardly along the whole southern boundary of New Mexico, (which runs north of the town called Paso,) to its western termination; thence northward along the western line of New Mexico, until it intersects the first branch of the river Gila; (or, if it should not intersect any branch of that river, then to the point on the said line nearest to such branch, and thence in a direct line to the same;) thence down the middle of the said branch and of the said river until it empties into the Rio Colorado; thence across the Rio Colorado, following the division line between Upper and Lower California, to the Pacific ocean.

"The southern and western limits of New Mexico, mentioned in this article, are those laid down in the map entitled "Map of the United Mexican States, as organized and defined by various acts of the Congress of said Republic, and constructed according to the best authorities. Revised edition. Published at New York, in 1847, by J. Disturnell." Of which map a copy is added to this treaty, bearing the signatures and seals of the undersigned plenipotentiaries. And in order to preclude all difficulty in tracing upon the ground the limit separating Upper from Lower California, it is agreed that the said limit shall consist of a straight line, drawn from the middle of the Rio Gila, where it unites with the Colorado, to a point on the coast of the Pacific ocean, distant one marine league due south of the southernmost point of the port of San Diego, according to the plan of said port made in the year 1782, by Don Juan Pantojer, second sailing-master of the Spanish fleet, and published at Madrid in the year 1802, in the atlas to the voyage of the schooners Sutil and Mexicana; of which plan a copy is hereunto added, signed and sealed by the respective plenipotentiaries."

Now, Mr. Chairman, instead of the ancient limit, 42d degree parallel of north latitude on the Pacific ocean, which was the Louisiana limit, or rather point of striking the Pacific, we have come down to about 32½ degrees of north latitude, and taken in the vast country included within the limit just named. For this we, in the way of "*indemnity for the past*" are to pay our citizens their claims against Mexico. Over six millions were presented to the joint commission that sat here for their adjudication. Over two millions were allowed by the commission. About one million was allowed by the American commissioners and their justice never passed upon by the umpire, and about three millions and a half were never examined or passed upon at all. Whatever their claims come to we will have them to pay. Besides this, I suppose also, by way of indemnity, we pay out of our own pockets to Mexico fifteen millions of dollars. I will vote this to carry out the treaty because the treaty-making power in our Government has bound me to do so. The faith and honor of the nation is plighted; repudiation is not known at the meridian of my re-

sidence. Besides, the question I think concluded by the action of the Government, heretofore, and I too well remember that when Louis Phillippe by treaty agreed to pay us the 25,000,000 francs indemnity, and the Chamber of Deputies refused to vote the appropriation to carry out the treaty, that General Jackson, backed by the moral sense and force of public opinion, took ground that commanded the respect and challenged the admiration of every one. Then, for our expenses of the war, when all arrearages, pensions, and contingencies are settled, I suppose 125 or 150 millions will cover it. This vast public debt, to be paid by *us* or *posterity*, is irrevocably saddled upon the nation. The wealth of a nation is its productive labor; in the sweat of the brow and the toil of the hand—they who grub at 50 cents a day or drive the plough or the shuttle at less, are dollar by dollar to pile up and pay this sum with its accumulating interest. 'Tis true we hold more of a sister republic than fell to the share of the autocrat of Russia when Poland was dismembered—more, yea, than all of Poland. Many thought the annexation of Texas without war an evil deeply to be deplored. Texas, “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” by far the most valuable part of the acquisition, claims as her boundary and for her domain her limits as defined by her act of Congress, 1836. That limit comes up to the Rio Grande, and east of the Rio Grande; up as far perhaps as Santa Fe; land districts are being organized by the State of Texas there.

Texas, as we now know, and I always believed, never designed to come under the dominion of England. This pretext or diplomacy is so fully exposed by President Houston, that I trust never again, as a nation, are we to have urged upon us this or that measure for fear of England. At one time I began to fear it would be an “imperious necessity,” good in law, and a “justifiable excuse” for a private robbery, that the culprit thought some Englishman would have robbed his victim, if he had not, with Yankee energy of character, and great forecast, anticipated him. The question, however, of boundary is now as unsettled between Texas and the United States as it was at the commencement of the war between Mexico and Texas.

If Texas prevails in her own pretensions, she will, according to Col. Benton’s account, get various parts of other provinces, and abstract from the Federal Treasury the domain purchased by common blood and common treasure. Between what was old Texas and that now claimed for her there is, as I understand, territory enough to make almost a half dozen States of such size as some we have. This is now a domestic question, to fester within, not a foreign one, and not settled by peace, but translated to our own breast. This, I suppose, if the Democracy prevails, is to be given up to Texas. She will have this domain, and we will have the barren, mountainous, far off prairies and sand-hills of New Mexico in part, and of California. We get then—I know not, and have never seen or heard what public lands or domain if any, they contain. Where covered by Indian tribes we are to have the care, the cost, the guardianship of them. We are, I suppose, to have the exclusive and imprescriptible right of cheating them out of their lands. We are of course bound to protect a greatly extended frontier—to have care over a foreign, heterogeneous, ignorant frontier population that we have adopted. That frontier is not only extended, but placed into juxtaposition to the Mexican population who before annexation and its consequences were remote from us. Besides our forts and military establishments are to be graduated to a different line of defences—our army will have to be increased beyond the old peace establishment—our squadron in the Pacific increased. By that army and navy, the great absorbents of the public treasure, our annual expenditures will be vastly increased. Texas, with her separate public domain, by underselling us, is, I suppose, to control our land system. We are to graduate, preserve, or otherwise accommodate ourselves as well as we can to the conflicting competition and clashing policy of two systems. Mr. Chairman, there is a fundamental difference between our policy and that which has marked the action of other governments. England has, for ages past, legislated for her own interest, her own aggrandizement, her own wealth. When she takes an island of the sea, or part of a continent, she manages and controls its trade, its legislation. She reaps the benefit of her wars, her expenditures, her conquests. By her navigation laws she built up her navy to be the mistress of the ocean. By her control of her provinces and their trade—by all appliances that her sagacious and wise statesmen, (she has had the wisest who ever controlled the destiny of any nation,) she has made herself the centre of the commercial world. Truly has it been said that the tattoo of her morning drum follows the sun in his diurnal course round the world—

“Her march is on the mountain wave, her home is on the deep.”

But her colossal greatness has been made to bestride the world by legislating for *her own benefit—for herself*. She took this country from the aboriginal Indian, and kidnapped the African to work it. I would not that we should imitate her remorseless cupidity, and turn bloody bruiser the world over, and by rapacity and wrong aggrandize ourselves whenever and wherever we find a weaker power. Let us imitate her wisdom; and in imitating it, know, that only by discrimination, by exaction, by arbitrary dominion, can we make profit of provinces and acquired territory. The moral sense of our people is against such a course; and, although no man in his individual capacity turns so rabid a philanthropist as *by force* or from *their election* to incorporate in his family all the idiots and lunatics, lazars and beggars in his neighborhood, and give them an equal inheritance in his homestead with his own children, yet we are but an aggregation of individuals—a nation standing to other nations in the relation that individuals do one to another in society. We, too, have violated the first principle of our own Government. Upon New Mexico and California we impose our institutions; we take charge and guardianship over them; they have never sought to come to us; our people dreamed not of them

when Texas annexation was discussed. We were strong enough for the world in arms without them, and we are weakened by having them.

They were to come here as at first proposed, and be admitted as States as soon as possible, by the recent treaty of Queretaro, or shall I say of amity and limits, between the United States of America, and Mexico; or must I call it the treaty of Trist? for he, a non-commissioned gentleman, cruising about in Mexico on his own hook, seems to have finished the war and made peace. Mr. President Polk was too cunning to be any more "taken in" by making that, than he was by making the Oregon treaty.

This provision seems, however, to have been modified or so stricken out that now this vast acquisition stands as new territory, to be formed into one or more territorial governments. They, of course, for all sorts of territorial appropriations as clamorous as young ravens, are to join in chorus with the cry of the horse leech's daughter, that will come up for annuities, agencies, extinguishment money for land titles from the legions of Indians on the land, and never ceasing their clamor of *give, give*, until they fade away before the face of the white man as snow melts before the sun.

There grows out of these matters another grave matter. By the ordinance of 1787, for the government of the territory northwest of the Ohio, "involuntary servitude," in other words slavery, was forever prohibited. It is true this ordinance extended to only what then was the Northwestern territory. Now, an honorable gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. WILMOT,) an out and out Democrat, at the first session of Congress after Mr. Polk's inauguration, to the bill for placing at the disposition of the President for war purposes three millions of dollars, attached a proviso that all future acquired territory by the United States should be forever, to use the phrase of the day, free territory. In this House, with a Democratic paternity, and when the Democrats had a majority of 60 or 70, by nine votes the proviso and bill passed. It was lost in the Senate. This being an extension of the ordinance, is what is generally termed Wilmot Provisoism; and, though then defeated, is now, like Aaron's rod, among political tenets—about to swallow up all others.

That emigrants from Kentucky or Tennessee, or the South generally, if anxious to migrate to the acquired territory, should be virtually excluded by the invidious discrimination that they shall not go with their property—*slaves*—seems not just to men who have stained with their blood every battle-field in Mexico. Are, for instance, the men and relatives of McKee, Clay, Marshall, and others, to be told this territory, the price of the blood of your brothers, is to you an inaccessible boon? The time does not allow me here, nor do I desire, to argue the power of Congress over slavery in the Territories; it is a matter of municipal regulation which, when States, they abolish or establish. Their territorial governments upon the subject will act, I suppose, if they act at all, within the powers granted in the charter establishing the territory. If neither Congress or territorial legislatures do act, or cannot act, as is intended, then the Judiciary sitting upon this question, looking to the law of nations, our Federal Constitution, the treaty of acquisition, must and will decide this question, setting free the immigrant's slave, or permitting him still to hold it.

These questions of law I do not undertake to decide. Ever since its first agitation, irreconcilably averse to political abolitionism, as a germ around which might collect the jarring elements of discord that eventually would disrupt and sever the Union, I grieve to see provisoism and abolitionism fraternizing, and once proud leaders of Democracy even lending their weight and their name to the building up of sectional parties in the Union. Who can read the awful warning of the Father of his country, in his valedictory address to his countrymen, and not feel that it is a warning voice from the grave of the mighty dead against the "geographical divisions" and "sectional jealousies" now evoked by the workings of party spirit, and brooding like a bird of evil omen over this once happy Union.

By the 8th section of the act of Congress, 1820, allowing to the Territory of Missouri the formation of a constitution previous and preparatory to her coming into the Confederacy, it was provided that, after that time, north of 36 degrees 30 minutes of north latitude, no slaveholding State should come into the Union. This provision did not affect the Territory of Missouri herself. She formed her constitution, and came into the Union afterwards, however, I believe, with a protest. The admission of Missouri in this way, and the fixing of the line aforesaid as a limit to slavery, is what is generally known as the Missouri compromise.

The extension of that compromise line to the Rocky Mountains, or to the Pacific ocean, may yet be the basis of an adjustment of this question. It is true, between 36½ and 49th parallels of latitude, there would on the Pacific ocean be 750 geographical miles of coast for free territory; and, say that 32½ degrees is about one league from San Diego, there would be but 210 miles of Pacific coast border for slave territory. The narrowness, however, of the southern slip on the Pacific is redeemed, or rather would be redeemed, from inequality by the consideration that, as you come in and cross the continent the southern slip widens at Texas as you diverge towards the Gulf.

It will be recollected that, when Texas was admitted, the line of the Missouri compromise was adopted; that north of 36 degrees 30 minutes no slavery is to exist; and, south of that line, of course any of the four additional States which may be formed out of Texas may, with this municipal regulation, act as they deem for themselves best. We know that on this floor the non-slaveholding States have a large majority of representatives. The Senate, I believe, is equally divided, and for years past by the alternate admission of slave and free States, our wisest statesmen have essayed to preserve that equilibrium. Men from the free States do not wish to be excluded from immigration and settlement on account of its being slave territory, nor do slaveholders wish to be excluded from like immigration and settlement because they cannot carry with them their property.

I am with the South, to any reasonable extent, upon these questions; and, Mr. Chairman, I alluded to the Missouri compromise, because if not that line, some other limit and boundary extending, if I may use the expression, the compromises, and the benefits of the compromises, of the Federal Constitution to our newly acquired territory must be found, or the fell demon of party strife, based upon geographical divisions of the country, and maddened by fanaticism, will tear asunder the Union.

Oh! that hereafter, when that strife and storm shall come, may the spirit of him over whom so many crocodile tears are shed, and upon whom prejudices, deep-rooted, popular prejudices, by inheritance, and with the accumulated rancor and hate of years, have been heaped—may the spirit of that man now recently freed from the undying persecution and malevolent, and always successful as malevolent, opposition of ungrateful men, come over the troubled waters, saying to his countrymen, as they cry out for fear, “Be of good heart, it is I, fear ye not,” and point to his conduct on the Missouri compromise as a heritage of wisdom from the good genius of their country, and yet still their sheet anchor and their safety in the fury of the storm.

In my own State, without disparagement to the long line of illustrious executives who for years have been her governors, I will say, that, under the promised guidance of a still greater leader, I am sure its philanthropy will remember that by diffusing slaves, you “increase their physical comforts;” that the number is not increased by increasing the territory where they may be held. Importation of them from Africa is now piracy by law. The beneficent agency of the Colonization Society is restoring many to the lands of their fathers; and, under the guidance of that man, (whose presence was recently an honor and ornament to the Senate of the nation,) I do not fear, whilst changing our State constitution, these questions, or any of kindred character, will disturb the repose and stability of that glorious old Commonwealth.

But, Mr. Chairman, I have been speaking of the Mexican war, its causes, its consequences, the evils it has devolved upon us. How has it affected other domestic questions? This drama in our history has brought us to a new era. When gentlemen speak of platforms and principles, appeal to prejudices and former popular judgments, to offer one or two suggestions from common sense, if such they be, I hope is not out of order. The distribution of the proceeds of the public lands among the States according to their federal representation on this floor, like the recommendation of Jackson in his message of 1829, as to the surplus in the Treasury, was a policy dictated by a replete and overflowing Treasury; it was by its terms to cease in time of war, and never, by its author or advocates, calculated for the disastrous times upon which we are fallen; besides, whenever the tariff was over and above twenty per cent. ad valorem on the articles taxed, by its terms it was suspended, and is now so suspended, and not repealed; besides, the proceeds of the lands are pledged for the war debt, *under mortgage, not distributable*. What the schools, roads, canals, colleges, in fine, all the arts of peace and civilization could hope for in the States from this fund, is now lost for years, perhaps forever, in consequence of the way our Government has been conducted. More taxation, grinding taxation, instead of these benefits, is probably our condition on this point.

As to the tariff, our chief reliance to extricate ourselves from debt, I regret to say ample scope is given for its silent unseen operation, to eat in upon our industry for years, to enable us to melt down the public debt now mountain high upon us. As it was after the late war with England, and during the time our revolutionary debt was oppressive, there will be one universal patriotic wish to extinguish the public debt. Our necessities will make us look to a tariff of revenue features; our necessities will constrain that tariff up high enough for protection, and there will be ample range for discrimination. This question is profoundly influenced now by our condition. Such tariff, however, as the representatives of the people deem adopted to the exigencies of our situation, will be approved by Gen. Taylor; I hope it will be a *judicious* one, as that is a standard even Democrats cannot object to, for by their book the people and Jackson never erred. If time allowed, (speaking only for myself,) as one Whig, I would prefer upon this subject of the tariff to give my views in full. A bank of the United States I do not now say is an “obsolete idea,” but no one of any party is advocating it; for myself, I do not wish one established, because the business and monetary concerns of the country have been forced into different channels; the revulsions and disasters of a transition state of things, in this regard, we have all witnessed. Capital is now differently invested to what it was when a recharter was agitated; the State banks might be crippled or crushed by its operation. The Atlantic States, or rather border States, having charge of external commerce, regulate their exchanges now without the instrumentality of such a bank; and in addition to a strong popular feeling against a recharter, I do not believe now, and most probably never will it be prudent or politic to agitate that question. Such is the popular judgment, and it ought to be respected.

However, “upon the subject of the tariff, the currency, the improvements of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive.” General Taylor, in his Allison letter, has referred to these great Domestic or internal interests, in this way. I will append to this speech that letter, as my view of a platform, broad enough to hold all patriots, and only so narrow as to exclude bigoted partisans. With the Constitution of the country for its basis, that letter as a platform, a creed founded on the scriptures, is the faith by which and under which I am willing politically to live, or politically to die.

Mark that letter; in it you see the modesty and distrust expressed by Jackson when he resigned his seat in the Senate of the United States, as one of the Senators from Tennessee; you see the spirit of Jackson’s letter to Mr. Monroe in reference to party: “I have, (says Gen. Taylor,) no private purposes to accomplish, no *party projects* to build up; no *enemies* to punish, nothing to serve but my country.” Mark it again; in it you see his decision to preserve inviolate the Constitution; in it you see once more tendered under his administration to the people, through their representatives, the government of the country; upon the subject of pledges how like Washington; and at this era in our history, more than all, mark what he says: “The *principles* of our Government, as well as its *true policy*, are opposed to the subjugation of other nations, and the dismemberment of other countries by conquest; in the language of the great Washington, *why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground*.” This latter tenet, upon which I desire to remark still, in addition to what I have already said of conquest, annexation, and the results of the Mexican war, before I proceed to do so cursorily, I will allude to one or two points.

Mr. Chairman, whilst this Presidential war has been progressing, an impudence unparalleled in our history has shown its brazen front, and the technical language to define treason, “aid and comfort to the enemy,” has been applied to the American citizen who dared to differ in opinion with the Executive, and did not and could not subscribe to his immaculate purity and inscrutable infallibility. The

high kingly prerogative that the President can do no wrong, from its throne of power, has cast upon the citizen the stigma and imputation of treason,—“moral treason”—for the exercise of the freedom of opinion and right of discussion. And all over the land we have heard the reverberating echo from party men and party presses, that they who opposed the course of the President upon the Mexican war, were “against their country.” Is the President the country? Are the people and their chattels of the executive? Are the descendants of sires who braved George the Third in his usurpations, the slaves, creatures, and property of the President? Are the successors of the Continental representatives nothing? By divine right are we not only corporally, but soul and mind, the goods and Congress and their constituents guilty of treason, if they dare to criticise, or doubt, or deny, the Executive supremacy, or question the omniscient, unerring, sovereign mandates of the President? Are we in war, when we appeal to the Lord of hosts and God of battles for the justice of our cause, blindly, as guardians of the blood and treasure of the nation, to give up the sacred trust, at the royal bidding; and without limit, without scrutiny, without stint, hand over the labors of life, all life’s endearments, our very heart’s blood, to feed his vanity, or carry out his ambitious purposes? I would rather be a serf to the Autocrat of the Russias, and knouted every day of my life, than thus be under the surveillance and ban of an American President, and the many headed monster of party around him. Obscurity or distance might render safe from vengeance the one, but the uncashed dogs of party, if this doctrine prevail, will hunt down, for acceptable slaughter in his most secret haunts, the humblest individual.

Not only this, Mr. Chairman, has been heard, but we know among our brave and martial people a sentiment and a right sentiment prevails, to stand by your country, if that country is misguided falsely, or foolishly led into war—still *right* or *wrong*, it is our country, and must be sustained. I have voted for the war bill; I have voted against the withdrawal of our army to the Rio Grande; I would have voted an additional volunteer force while the war lasted, to aid and protect our countrymen abroad. They have nobly, gloriously done their duty. The only remedy for the nation without the concurrence of the President to relieve itself in any like dilemma, is a change of rulers and dynasty. This is the only mode to get clear of your commander of the army and navy, who may begin a war as it now seems, and *who only with the Senate* by treaty can terminate it. I deeply deplore, too, the morbid pruriency for war, supposed to pervade the bosoms of a generous and brave people, has been cunningly played upon. Thirst for adventure, thirst for glory and distinction, are chivalrous traits in our people and characteristic of them. This knowledge, I fear has induced him to forget that war with its desolations, its demoralization, its widows, its orphans, its carnage even to the victors, seldom brings remuneration—*indemnity*—for the brave and noble cut off by disease and death, and the pecuniary responsibilities thrown as a mill stone around the necks of the survivors. Away, then, with all that demagogical cant about war, as if civilization and christianity are to be renounced, and men are to press forward to slaughter, as they would jump to some jubilee of delight. Especially disgusting are persons, who with all their opportunities of enlisting, yet never went to war; of the peace party in war, and war party in peace; pseudo patriots, in favor of war in the abstract, and upon principle. One would imagine, to hear one of these fleshed tigers whine for blood, breathing “threatening and slaughter,” and imbued with sanguinary notions, so had our Achilles redivivus fed on bear’s flesh and lion’s marrow, fierce, relentless, implacable, so delicious the taste of human blood to his palate, so statesmanlike to his conviction, legalized homicide, that a baby broiled for breakfast, and a man roasted for dinner, could only satisfy his cannibal and carnivorous propensities. O that all such could be gratified with a mission to the Fejee Islands, and there enjoy that “feast of reason and flow of soul,” that kindred spirits feel in right communion met. The hero of the war, Taylor, ought to suit the war men; if struck with its justice and dazzled by the splendor of its achievements, why not from gratitude and propriety sustain the *very man* of the war. And is it because he stands where Washington stood upon our own soil, and against aggression, encroachment, and war? This perhaps may be so, for we know their leader, General Cass was among the foremost and stanchest abettors of the President, on the Oregon question, for war with England or “all of Oregon;” he was and has been for the war with Mexico. He was but recently a friend for the passage of the ten regiment bill; more troops to overrun all Mexico, and perhaps have so prostrated and annihilated her strength, that her entire annexation by many was thought would in that event be eventually the result; he was for the armed military occupation of Yucatan, and urged it. He declared in his place in the Senate, it would not hurt us “to swallow the whole of Mexico.” What in addition to this, do we see? During the 29th Congress, did not Mr. Berrien attempt to get in and passed the following conservative proviso to a war appropriation measure, against a war of conquest, and against the dismemberment of Mexico:

“Provided always, and it is hereby declared to be the true intent and meaning of Congress in making this appropriation, that the war with Mexico *ought not to be prosecuted by this Government with any view to the dismemberment of that Republic, or to the acquisition by conquest of any portion of her territory*; that this Government ever desires to maintain and preserve peaceful and friendly relations with all nations; and particularly with the neighboring Republic of Mexico, will always be ready to enter into negotiations, with a view to terminate the present unhappy conflict, on terms which shall secure the just rights, and preserve inviolate the national honor of the United States and of Mexico; that it is especially desirable, in order to maintain and preserve those amicable relations which ought always to exist between neighboring republics, that the boundary of the State of Texas should be definitively settled, and that provision be made by the Republic of Mexico for the prompt and equitable settlement of the just claims of our citizens on that Republic.”

And this was voted down by a strict party vote, Gen. Cass voting against it. Were not the resolutions of the Baltimore Convention of 1844, as an approved policy, reaffirmed and re-endorsed, and upon that occasion in that Convention, a Senator from Washington here, the Chairman of the Committee upon Foreign Affairs in the other end of the Capitol, in that Convention about to hang “on the outer wall” its principles of future action, it is stated “in the course of Mr. Hannegan’s remarks he alluded to the progress of republicanism in Europe in imitation of this Republic of thirty States, soon to be enlarged by New Mexico, Oregon, and California—[a voice in the crowd inquired if we might not expect Yucatan too]—to which Mr. Hannegan replied, no, but perhaps a far richer State, Cuba,

and he begged permission to add Jamaica too." The resolutions some time since introduced by Mr. YULEE, a Democratic Senator, in reference to Cuba, cannot be forgotten, nor their import mistaken.

As to Canada and north of us:

The spirit that animates the Democratic leaders may be inferred, if we will only look for example to a letter of 10th June, 1848, inserted in the Union, the official organ, with apparent approbation, in which letter, from John Campbell, in his name, giving his reasons for supporting the nominees of the Democratic Convention, he says, "as Lewis Cass will be triumphantly elected, he will not submit to the foreign dictation of the British Government; if that haughty and overbearing power dare insult our country, he will take ample vengeance upon the human race in every quarter of the Globe, and will ignominiously expel her from the shores of this continent, thus affording an opportunity to the brave but oppressed Irish nation to recover its long lost nationality." It may be legitimate for demagogues to cater to the prejudices or hatred our people have against England, and hold out soothing delusions to the Irish people, whom every American wishes were "redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled;" bruised and down-trodden as they have been for centuries under the iron heel of a stern despotism that falsely vaunts "the shackles fall from the slave when he touches her soil." But are we not only to resist wrong, but *take vengeance and expel her from the continent?* At the 8th of January supper last winter in this city, at Jackson hall, (they invoke Jackson's name always and every way,) where was congregated Dallas and Ritchie and Dickinson and Cass, and others, the orator of the day, Mr. Dickinson, speaking in unison with the feelings of his party, unrebuked, yea, applauded, closed his address with the sentiment, "A more perfect Union—embracing the entire American continent." The present Union is imperfect, unsatisfactory; Canada and the British provinces and the Spanish provinces to the Isthmus of Darien, are necessary to round out the "area of freedom."

These, among other instances, are referred to to show that the spirit of conquest deeply pervades the party that have stepped off the Washington platform as to our foreign relations. Ought not a voter to weigh well the perilous hazard of committing to General Cass the helm of the vessel of state? If this aggression and annexing policy is to prevail, if "imperious necessity" and Mr. Monroe's continental policy are to be tortured out of shape as pretexts to cover it, may I ask who can lift the veil of the future, and say how impoverished we shall be to sustain long and wasting wars? Before England releases her right to Canada, if the chances of war should beat us back from "our bold and bloody track," the horrors of the retreat of Napoleon's perishing legions from Moscow foreshadow a frightful waste of life. If even we succeed, how many of our countrymen shall sleep in death with Wolfe and Montgomery, or their bones bleach upon the plains of Abraham, or be rattled by the wild wolves in the frozen forest of Canada before that success is consummated? If Jamaica and Cuba are to be had, like the French in St. Domingo, how many of our men are to rot even before death by the putrid diseases of the climate, and how long will it take to beat down that old Spanish pride that warred seven centuries against the Moors. And then what benefit to us to acquire the conquests of distant countries and impracticable people? The non-intervention, peaceful policy—conservative—careful of *our own people*, the Washingtonian policy as to foreign matters, is ours. As to domestic questions, to the people, and the peoples' representatives, whom it rightfully belongs, is given the care and guardianship of internal policy. The engulfing maelstrom of Executive power and influence that threatens to swallow up with more than Ottoman despotism all the powers and co-ordinate branches of the Government is to be stopped, and the Government brought back to its ancient Republican tact.

What platform of principles can a patriot more desire than this?

The Federal Constitution, our charter of union and liberty, administered by the integrity and intelligence of General Taylor; not the edicts of an irresponsible convention, giving out dogmas as a second dispensation superior to the constitution.

For domestic policy, the interests, the intelligence, the patriotism of the American people, expressed and carried out through their Representatives in Congress assembled, Executive power, in its kingly advance of royalty and prerogative to Federalism consolidated into a vast despotism, checked. The arts of peace cultivated, education, the improvement of our internal resources and condition improved—and industrial and mechanical pursuits, in all their ramifications, not reft of their labors to sustain a splendid elective monarchy.

For our foreign relations, "the Washingtonian platform"—"no entangling alliances, no standing on foreign soil"—our country as it is—let that be our motto.

And in that country, and for our people, let our rulers exert their patriotism. Sir, are the Mississippi, Ohio, and like thoroughfares to be choked by snags, and our people to dig canals at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, or send explorations to the Dead Sea "to fish up Sodom and Gomorrah for annexation?" Are our vessels to rot for want of harbors, our produce for want of transportation, heavy taxation to arrest the education and advancement of our youth, that survive the conscriptions and levies for wasting foreign war? The indefinite extensibility of our federative system I believe to be Utopian and visionary. It is true steam, by its wonderful agency, has annihilated time and space, and the knowledge of events now, instead of travelling like waves from a pebble tossed in water, by means of the Telegraph, is instantaneous, ubiquitous. Distant, however, from each other, of diverse institutions, being under different latitudes, not one-tenth or twentieth of the country settled, too distant on our borders now from our Government here to be heard by it, or, I fear, feel affection for it, I desire no more incongruous elements—legions of Indians—the hybrid and mongrel population of the States of Mexico, or Canadians, by compulsion or choice brought into our copartnership, our Confederacy, when your constituents and mine can but lose by the association. "*Roma ruil suis viribus*," and, as said of her, so speaks the voice of history in reference to all other widely extended governments. She was a Republic, till aggrandizement and conquest made for her emperors; and by the energetic and iron force of their power she was held together for a time. The Russian empire now maintains its integrity, not by the bonds of affection and love for the government, but in virtue of the ties and fetters forged by the bayonet and the sword. Are we, with the experience of all history pointing to the chasm ahead of us, to run the same course, and end this Government, the hope of the human family as to a self-government by the people, by falling, from the necessity of things, into a strong imperial power, consolidating and embracing all power here and in our President? Heaven forefend the calamitous day

that shall witness our squalid, beggared, tax-ridden people, like oppressed Ireland or Poland, the serfs of Russia, or the laborers of England, in toil and starvation waste their lives and the labor of life to uphold the wars, the splendors, the extravagances of a haughty, heartless, imperial central government.

On the other hand the bright side of all these reflections I foresee in the election of General Taylor to the Chief Magistracy of the nation. The country is deeply and gratefully indebted to him. The strongest reason I hear urged against him is, that he is not a party man. I admire him because he is not an ultra party man. Parties are not necessary to the country. Washington had no party—Monroe may be said to have had no party. Party is not necessary for the Administration, for even that feeble and corrupt man, John Tyler, by the aid of a corporal's guard of conscientious patriots, carried on the Government so commendably, even a great party adopted much of his policy. The minions of power, demagogues, they who would be the sycophants about the footstool of a throne, may adjure their friends by party ties, invoke the demon of party strife, may congregate to a Presidential election as to an unfraternal foray and strife. But I hope before the Ides of November that he who, at Fort Harrison, in the Black Hawk war, in the hammocks and everglades of Florida, in the chapparal and on the mountains of Mexico, as often as he has before the enemies of his country wherever he has met them, scattered them before him like chaff before the wind, may, like a consuming fire among stubble, rid the land of ultra partisans, and once more every patriot, for many a sunny and halcyon day, may look out upon his country *fixed, defined, peaceful*, and send up in his morning orisons and evening matins the aspiration, "Liberty and union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

APPENDIX.—Letter from General Taylor.

BATON ROUGE, April 22, 1848.

DEAR SIR: My opinions have recently been so often misconceived and misrepresented, that I deem it due to myself, if not to my friends, to make a brief exposition of them upon the topics to which you have called my attention.

I have consented to the use of my name as a candidate for the Presidency. I have frankly avowed my own distrust of my fitness for that high station; but having, at the solicitation of many of my countrymen, taken my position as a candidate, I do not feel at liberty to surrender that position until my friends manifest a wish that I should retire from it. I will then most gladly do so. I have no private purposes to accomplish, no party projects to build up, no enemies to punish—nothing to serve but my country.

I have been very often addressed by letter, and my opinions have been asked upon almost every question that might occur to the writers as affecting the interests of their country or their party. I have not always responded to these inquiries, for various reasons.

I confess, whilst I have great cardinal principles which will regulate my political life, I am not sufficiently familiar with all the minute details of political legislation to give solemn pledges to exert my influence, if I were President, to carry out this or defeat that measure. I have no concealment. I hold no opinion which I would not readily proclaim to my assembled countrymen; but crude impressions upon matters of policy, which may be right to-day and wrong to-morrow, are, perhaps, not the best test of fitness for office. One who cannot be trusted without pledges cannot be confided in merely on account of them.

I will proceed, however, now to respond to your inquiries:

First.—I reiterate what I have often said—I am a Whig, but not an ultra Whig. If elected I would not be the mere President of a party. I would endeavor to act independent of party domination. I should feel bound to administer the Government untrammelled by party schemes.

Second.—The veto power. The power given by the Constitution to the Executive to interpose his veto is a high conservative power, but, in my opinion, should never be exercised except in cases of clear violation of the Constitution or manifest haste and want of consideration by Congress. Indeed, I have thought that, for many years past, the known opinions and wishes of the Executive have exercised undue and injurious influence upon the legislative department of the Government; and for this cause I have thought our system was in danger of undergoing a great change from its true theory. *The personal opinions of the individual who may happen to occupy the Executive chair ought not to control the action of Congress upon questions of domestic policy; nor ought his objections to be interposed where questions of constitutional power have been settled by the various departments of Government and acquiesced in by the people.*

Third.—Upon the subject of the tariff, the currency, the improvements of our great highways, rivers, lakes, and harbors, the will of the people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, ought to be respected and carried out by the Executive.

Fourth.—The Mexican war. I sincerely rejoice at the prospect of peace. My life has been devoted to arms, yet I look upon war, at all times, and under all circumstances, as a national calamity, to be avoided if compatible with national honor. The principles of our Government, as well as its true policy, are opposed to the subjugation of other nations, and the dismemberment of other countries, by conquest. In the language of the great Washington, "Why should we quit our own to stand on foreign ground?" In the Mexican war our national honor has been vindicated, amply vindicated; and, in dictating terms of peace, we may well afford to be forbearing, and even magnanimous; to our fallen foe.

These are my opinions upon the subjects referred to by you; and any reports or publications, written or verbal, from any source, differing in any essential particular from what is here written, are unauthorized and untrue.

I do not know that I shall again write upon the subject of national politics. I shall engage in no schemes, no combinations, no intrigues. If the American people have not confidence in me, they ought not to give me their suffrages. If they do not, you know me well enough to believe me when I declare I shall be content. I am too old a soldier to murmur against such high authority.

To Captain J. S. ALLISON.

Z. TAYLOR.